FIRST POST HOUSES.

Established by Cyrus, the Founder of the Persian Empire.

The first posts are said to have originated in the regular couriers established by Cyrus the Great about 550 B. C., who erected post houses throughout the kingdom of Persia. Augustus was the first to introduce this institution among the Romans, 31 B. C., and he was imitated by Charlemagne about 800 A. D. Louis XI. was the first sovereign to establish post houses in France, owing to his eagerness for news, and they were also the first institution of this nature in Europe. This was in 1470, or about 2,000 years after they were started in Persia.

In England in the reign of Edward IV. (1481) riders on post horses went stages of the distance of twenty miles from each other in order to procure the king the earliest intelligence of the events that passed in the course of the war that had arisen with the Scots. A proclamation was issued by Charles I. in 1631 that, "whereas to this time there hath been no certain intercourse between the kingdoms of England and Scotland, the king now commands his postmaster of England for foreign parts to settle a running post or two between Edinburgh and London to go thither and come back again in six days."

INCURABLE.

An Illustration of Some of the Interference That Wireless Operators Cannot Overcome.

Few are the steamer passengers who fail to visit the wireless office aboard ship to watch the operation of the instruments and to question the operator. Needless to say, the technical understanding of the well meaning visitors is a variable quantity. The operator must listen to wondering exclamations, original suggestions for the improvement of the service, discourses on the relations between wireless telegraphy and spiritualism and other doubtful topics with uniform courtesy. At times, however, the strain is too great. It was a lady passenger with an eye for details who came to the wireless room and looked wonderingly in.

"Oh, here's the wireless! May I come in? Isn't it wonderful to think of sending those—those waves—you call them waves, don't you? How fascinating to work at this! Are those jars filled with water?"

"Those are condenser jars, madam, quite empty."

"Really? I don't believe I could ever understand it. That coil of wire looks like a birdcage."

"That is the inductance helix."

"What are those things over your ears?"

"The receiving telephones."

"Then you have telephone connection too. One can hardly keep up with the times these days. What does that coil do?"

"That is the receiving tuner and interference preventer."

"Wonderful! Does it keep out all interference?"

"Not all," replied the operator wearily. "Some kinds of interference can't be tuned out; we just have to stand it."—Youth's Companion.

EIGHT CENTS A DAY.

Workers' Pay In England When Board Was a Shilling a Week.

There was a time when a workman in England received 8 cents a day as an ordinary wage, when skilled artisans commanded 12 cents a day and when women worked in the field at such tasks as reaping straw, hoeing, planting beans and washing sheep for 2 cents a day, and a wise student of the subject has expressed the opinion that the British workman of that day was better off than he has ever been since then.

That sounds paradoxical. But the explanation is this: The workman who sold his services for 8 cents a day could buy good beef or mutton for 1½ cents a pound. Wheat cost him on the average only 18 cents a bushel. He could get board for 12 to 16 cents a week. The pay he would receive for fifteen weeks' services would suffice to purchase a supply of suitable foodstuffs, according to the standard of his time (consisting of wheat, malt and oatmeal), to maintain his family for an entire year.

Under these circumstances 8 cents a day—increased to 12 cents in harvest time—was a fair wage, and "times were good" for the average workman. —McClure's Magazine.

Opera In Dumb Show.

The late Clara Novello in her reminiscences tells how Malibran once appeared in "Sonnambula" without uttering a note. She had taken cold and was prevented from singing at the last moment, though crowds of early comers already filled the house. "On the manager telling her, in despair, that, besides loss of money, these disappointed people would be dangerous she said, 'I can't speak above my breath; I should have to do it in dumb show!' Bunn at once caught at this outburst as if seriously meant and on his knees begged her to try this, and she, fired by the novelty, did so. The grateful public raved in praise of this surprising tour de force, and the sensation it made filled the papers."

Bathing Machines.

Somebody has inquired why "bathing machines," the comfortable privacy of which for ocean bathing has never attracted bathers in this country, are called machines, remarking that there is nothing of a machine about them except the horse which draws them to the beach. The answer has been found in the new Oxford Dictionary. It appears that a "machine" was originally a "structure of any kind, material or immaterial," and has nothing to do with machinery, a later word. Ships were called machines, and it would have been proper to speak of a pulpit as a machine.—Argonaut.

Laughter and Death.

He can be said to have won the game of life who at the last can laugh. That final speech of O. Henry, the short story writer, was finer than any story he ever wrote. Just as he was dying he turned to the doctor and said: "Pull up the curtain, doc. I'm afraid to go home in the dark." The speech had in it wide courage and a sense of values. One forgives the royal Charles much frivolity for the sake of his dying speech, "Gentlemen, I fear I'm an unconscionable time a-dying."—Harper's.

A Complicated Case.

"Of course, doctor, German measles are seldom serious?"

"I never met but one fatal case."

"Fatal?"

"Yes. It was a Frenchman, and when he discovered it was German measles that he had mortification set in."

LEST WE FORGET.

A Critic Reminds Us of How the Majority of People Have Fought Progress.

We of this big republic complacently affirm the glory of our national achievements and are not without temptation to acclaim them as proof of superior craft and judgment.

But herein do we forget that we are on record as having cast our vote against every move that has contributed to the present century's development.

We raised our voices in contemptuous protest against the first projected railways. Had the locomotive waited its signal from the people it would not yet have started.

When the electric telegraph was shown to us we brushed it aside as a toy and laughed its inventor to scorn when he offered to sell us his rights for a few thousand dollars.

We put into jail as an impostor the first man who brought anthracite coal to market. We broke to pieces Howe's sewing machine as an invention calculated to ruin the working classes, and we did the same thing to the harvester and the binder. We scorned the typewriter as a plaything.

We gathered together in mass meetings of indignation at the first proposal to install electric trolley lines, and when Dr. Bell told us he had invented an instrument by means of which we might talk to one another across the town we responded with accustomed ridicule, and only the reckless among us contributed it its being.—Atlantic Monthly.

HUMAN DISSECTION.

Surgery and the Anatomists In the Olden Days.

For a long time Alexandria was the only medical center of the world, and the physician Galen, born about 130 A. D., had to journey from Rome to the African city even to see a skeleton. He sent his students to the German battlefields to dissect the bodies of the national enemies, while he himself used apes as most resembling human beings. Human dissection was revived in Bologna in the fourteenth century, where Madonna Manzolina later was professor of anatomy, undoubtedly one of the first women doctors, if not the very first. Leonardo da Vinci, painter of "The Last Supper," was a great anatomist, but dissection had fallen into disuse when Vesalius finally revived it about the middle of the sixteenth century.

Even in comparatively modern times anatomists have been the object of attacks by the populace. In 1765 Dr. John Shippen of Philadelphia was mobbed as a grave robber. Doctors' riots in New York occurred twenty-three years later and were due to the belief that the medical students robbed graves continually. It was the lack of opportunity to obtain subjects regularly that led to the practice of grave robbing and originated what Dr. Keene calls "a set of the lowest possible villains—the resurrectionists." —New York World.

Do You Help Others?

It has been tritely said that for every one who stands alone there are twelve to lean against him. How is it with you? Are you one of those against whom others lean for help and encouragement, or are you leaning against some one and drawing your inspiration and courage from him? It depends entirely on yourself whether you take a positive attitude in your work or whether your negative characteristic shall dominate. It is much easier to go through life making as little effort as possible, but it is a poor way if we are going to make life yield even a small modicum of what it holds for us. If you are working earnestly and hoping for success there is only one way to attain it, and that is through your positive characteristics.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Julius Caesar.

Caesar was assassinated March 15, 44 B. C., and was at the time of his death fifty-six years old. It is not alone as a military genius that his fame endures. By almost common consent he was the most remarkable all round man of antiquity—masterfully great not only as general, but as writer, statesman and administrator. In addition to these high accomplishments he was a great mathematician, philologist, architect and jurist. His conversational powers were extraordinary, and from all accounts he was in his manner one of the most attractive of men.

Henry of Navarre and the Rod.

Henry IV. of France was a firm believer in the adage, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." In a letter to the governess of his son he wrote in October, 1607: "Madame—I have to complain that you have not informed me of having flogged my son. I desire and request that you will flog him whenever he is disobedient or otherwise troublesome, knowing as I do that nothing will do him more good. I speak from experience, as at his age I was frequently birched."—Paris Gaulois.

Just Made It.

Farmer Giles (who has just cashed a check)—I don't think this money's right. The Cashier—Would you mind counting it again, sir? I think you'll find it correct. Farmer Giles (having done so)—Yes, but you be careful, young man; it's only just right.—London Sketch.

Love of our neighbor is the only door out of the dungeon of self.—MacDonald.

THE ELECTROSCOPE.

An Instrument by Which the Presence of Electricity Is Detected Was Perfected In 1787.

The electroscope is an instrument for the detection of electricity. It depends for its action on the principle that bodies charged with like electricity repel, while those charged with unlike electricity attract each other. The ordinary pith ball suspended on a silk thread is the simplest form of the instrument.

The most common type of electroscope is that devised by Bennett in 1787 and known as the gold leaf electroscope. It consists of two strips of gold leaf or thin aluminium foil suspended from the lower extremity of a conductor within a glass bottle or jar. The upper end of the conductor terminates in a ball or a plate in case the instrument is to be used as a condensing electroscope. If a body charged with positive electricity is brought near the knob of the electroscope the negative electricity will be attracted to the knob and the positive repelled to the leaves, which diverge. If now the finger is touched to the knob the positive electricity is drawn off and the leaves collapse, while the negative electricity is held bound. Removing the charged body, the leaves will diverge again, charged with negative electricity. In this case the instrument can be used to determine the nature of a charge of a body brought near it, as with a positive charge the leaves will collapse and with a negative charge spread farther apart.—Exchange.

A STUDY IN FIGURES.

Calculations Necessary to Produce the Nautical Almanac.

It may safely be said that no one outside the publishing office has read the entire Nautical Almanac from beginning to end, but each figure of the printed almanac is in the office examined twice and read three times.

The total number of figures exceeds a million; but, great as that number is, it is trifling compared with the number of figures employed in the calculations, as the almanac figures represent "bare" results only. The moon, for instance, requires for its calculation more than a million and a half of figures, and similarly with other branches of the work, such as the sun, the planets, etc. Contrary to the general opinion, practically every figure in the book is fresh from year to year.

The tables from which nearly all the work is calculated have been originally constructed from the labors of the astronomical observer and to a large extent from the observations of the sun, moon and planets made at the Royal observatory, Greenwich. Telescopes and other astronomical appliances are conspicuously absent, as the work of the staff is purely mathematical and not observational.—London Telegraph.

A Legend of Mount Omi.

Mount Omi, on the border between western China and Tibet, has the longest staircase in the world. On top of the mountain there stands a Buddhist temple, around which gather some of the holiest traditions of that religion and which is made a Mecca to the Chinese. To facilitate the ascent of its slippery sides some 20,000 steps have been cut in the mountain, forming a single flight, up which the pilgrim toils. Because of its inaccessibility few Europeans have ever visited the spot, but a number of travelers have ascended the stairway and are positive that it is no legendary myth. There is a legend that in earlier times the pilgrim was forced to ascend the mountain without artificial aids until the monks conceived the plan of requiring every pilgrim who would gain especial benefit of his journey to cut a single step.

Some Consolation.

He was a frugal Scot and when the collection plate came round dropped in a florin in mistake for the humble copper. Speedily discovering his mistake, however, he stepped softly down the aisle and requested the oof gatherer to give him back the coin, which request was politely but firmly refused. A shade of disappointment flitted over the northerner's face as he walked slowly back to his pew.

"Aweel," he said, "it's a loss, but there's some sma' consolation in reflectin' it's a bad one. It might have got me into trouble anywhere else."—London Telegraph.

Dickens and His Wife.

Commenting on the unhappy relations between Dickens and his wife, Goldwin Smith wrote in one of his last papers: "It was a common case. Dickens had married at a low level, and his wife had not risen with him; otherwise there was no fault on her side. The matrimonial history of writers of works of imagination has often been unhappy. Their imagination turns the woman into an angel, and then they find that she is a woman."

Two Is Company.

"Have you ever loved before?" asked the coy maid.

"Yes," yawned the worldly young man, "but—never before a chaperon, two small brothers and a pet bulldog."

And then she suggested a trip down the old road to see the stars.—Chicago News.

A Sugar Coated Pill.

"How did you persuade your daughter to learn kitchen work?"

"By calling it domestic science."—Pittsburg Post.

DISLIKES INNOVATIONS.

The Rhinoceros Is the Most Conservative of Beasts and Attacks Anything That Is New to Him.

Sir Frederick Treves, the distinguished British surgeon, in his book "Uganda For a Holiday" has a word or two to say about the rhinoceros.

"The rhinoceros is the embodiment of blind conservatism," he writes. "Its hide is impenetrable, its vision is weak, while its intellect is weaker. It has, however, two marked qualities—combativeness and a sense of smell. It is aroused to its maximum energy by the presence of anything that is new. This object need not be a thing that is aggressive or inconvenient. Its offensiveness depends upon the fact that it is unfamiliar, and the more unfamiliar the object is the worse the rhinoceros acts.

"When a rhinoceros smells a man he will charge him with maniacal violence, although the man may be merely sitting on a stool reading Milton. The massive beast will dash at him like a torpedo or a runaway locomotive simply because the smell of him is novel. Actuated by this insane hate of whatever savors of an innovation, the rhinoceros has charged an iron water tank on the outskirts of a camp and has crumpled it up as a blacksmith would an empty meat tin.

"A conservative rhinoceros with a senile dislike of anything new once charged a train on the Uganda railway, but with no more serious results than the tearing away of the footboard of a carriage. As regards the rhinoceros in this case, it appeared surprised that a thing composed, as it had imagined, of flesh and blood could be so hard. It went off with an additional grievance and an increased swelling of the head."

MOSCOW CATHEDRAL.

Fantastic Looking Edifice Erected by Ivan the Terrible.

One of the most extraordinary and fantastic Christian places of worship in the world is the Cathedral of Moscow, known as Vasili Blajenni, strange not only in outline and conception, but even stranger in its history. No one knows the architect's name, but the story goes that the czar ordered his eyes to be put out directly the church was completed, so that he should never be able to surpass his work. The idea of the building was inspired by the wickedest and maddest monarch who ever sat on a throne—Ivan the Terrible, czar of Muscovy.

The architecture is in every respect extravagant and barbaric, and the coloring is garish in the extreme. It has nine chapels, roofed by nine cupolas, each different and each stranger than the other. One resembles a pineapple, another a melon, a third is said to ape a hedgehog in its appearance, and the rest are more or less grotesque. Some are gilt; others are painted in brilliant hues. Indeed, the only description is that it is a nightmare of a church, the fitting legacy of a ruler who grilled his counselors in frying pans and clothed his subjects in bearskins in order that trained dogs might worry and tear them to pieces.—Strand Magazine.

A King's Hobby.

The late king of Siam had an extraordinary hobby—that of collecting empty matchboxes of all nations. In this connection an interesting story is related. During one of his visits to England the king while passing down Bond street one afternoon, accompanied by two members of his suit, espied an empty matchbox which had been discarded by its owner and thrown away into the middle of the thoroughfare. Without a moment's thought the monarch dashed into the middle of the crowded traffic, grasped the much coveted treasure and was nearly run over by a passing cab. The fact, however, that he was able to add a new specimen to his collection gathered under such circumstances more than compensated him for the risk which he had run.—London News.

Gothic Architecture.

Gothic architecture began about the ninth century after Christ and soon began to spread all over Europe. Its great feature is the pointed arch, and it was at first called the "pointed style." Most of the glorious old world cathedrals are in the Gothic, and it is generally conceded that for religious purposes no other style of architecture is so perfectly suited. It has been said that the first idea of the Gothic was suggested by the interlacing boughs and trunks of the great woods in which German Christianity was formed; hence the name Gothic.—New York American.

Still More Painful.

The Young Politician—I can assure you there is nothing more painful than having to make—er—er—one's first speech in public. Young Politician's Wife—Oh, yes, there is, dear! Young Politician (displeased)—Then what is it, pray? Young Politician's Wife (sweetly)—Having to listen to it, my dear.

He Was Considerate.

She—I should like that lovely pearl necklace. Look what beauties they are. He—It's better not to have such large pearls, my dear. People always think they are false.—Journal Amusant.

Marriage.

"Marriage," said the serious man, "is an education in itself."

"Yes," commented old Grouch, "it teaches you what not to do after you have done it."—Boston Transcript.

Philosophy is nothing but discretion. —Selden.

BURNT CORK.

The Paste Used by Minstrel Performers When Blacking Up Is a Factory Product.

The popular impression as to the application of burnt cork by minstrel performers and actors in general is that it is rubbed on the face and hands of the player from a cork whose end is charred in a convenient gas jet. This impression is, however, incorrect. The burnt cork used by minstrels and others is the product of the theatrical "paint factories," just as is any other cosmetic or pigment employed by the profession.

One house makes it in the following manner: The corks are placed in three tin vessels, resembling wash boilers, with holes punched in their sides and bottom. Alcohol is sprinkled over the corks, and they they are "fired." When the corks have been properly charred they are placed in muslin sacks, which are kneaded in barrels of water. This operation forces the powdered charcoal through the sacks into the water.

When all the charred corks have been worked through the sacks into the water in this way the water is drained through a close canvas sack, and what remains in that sack is ready for the performers. The stuff is put up in cans, from which, when the minstrel is ready to "black up," he takes a little of the black paste in his hands and applies it to his face, neck and sometimes his hands.—New York Herald.

A CURIOUS BIRD.

The Crested Hoactzin When Hatched Has Four Legs.

The crested hoactzin of British Guiana is the only survivor of a certain race of birds most of which are now known only as fossils. The hoactzin inhabits the most secluded forests of South America, and its survival beyond its congeners is doubtless owing to its retiring habits and to the fact that it feeds on wild arum leaves, which give its flesh a most offensive flavor, rendering it unfit for food.

The chief peculiarity of the hoactzin consists in the fact that when it is hatched it possesses four well developed legs. The young birds leave the nest and climb about like monkeys over the adjoining limbs and look more like tree toads than birds.

The modification of the fore limbs begins at once after hatching, when the claws of the digits fall off and the whole clawlike hand begins to flatten and become wing shaped. Feathers soon appear, and before full growth is reached not a vestige remains of the original character.

The adult birds not only have no claws upon their wings, but their thumbs even are so poorly developed that one would hardly suspect that in the nestlings we have the nearest approach to a quadruped found among existing birds.—London Tit-Bits.

Tung Po and Teamaking.

There is but one way of making tea, for—

Unless the water boiling be
To pour on water spoils the tea.

The teapot itself should be heated very hot before the tea is placed in it and the boiling water poured on. It should be scalding hot water or the leaves will float to the top.

No less authority than Tung Po, the Chinese poet, is quoted for a recipe for teamaking. He says: "Whenever tea is to be infused take water from a running stream and boil it over a lively fire. It is an old custom to use running water, boiled over a lively fire. That from springs in the hills is said to be best and river water the next, while well water is the worst. A lively fire is a clear, bright charcoal fire. When making an infusion do not boil the water too hastily. At first it begins to sparkle like crabs' eyes, then somewhat like fish's eyes, and lastly it boils up like pearls innumerable springing and waving about. This is the way to boil water."

"Touch Not the Queen."

Under this title a Paris journal professes to give an account of the tragic death of the queen of Siam, who was as greatly loved as her consort. Some years ago her majesty was boating with ladies of the court in a lake in the gardens of the palace at Bangkok. The boat overturned, and the queen could not swim. She was surrounded by numerous personages who could have saved her life, but no one has the right to extend the hand upon the queen. The king alone could have held her up and prevented her from sinking, and he was nowhere at hand. Respectfully the court allowed the queen to drown.

Chippendale's Own.

"Is it genuine Chippendale?"

"Absolutely, sir."

"But this looks like a crack right across"—

"Done by Chippendale himself, sir, in a fit of rage when he heard the union had called the men out."—London Punch.

The Other Was Important.

"Two great desires of my life have been gratified. One was to go up in an airship."

"And the other?"

"To get safely back to earth."—Exchange.

A Real Pretty Excuse.

Bessie's Mother—Bessie, did you let that Mr. Snuggie have a kiss? Bessie —Yes, mamma. He said it would be a goodby kiss, and I was just dead anxious to have him go.—Puck.

The way of the world is to make laws, but follow customs.—Montaigne.